

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA's BEACH Report:

Rhode Island 2009 Swimming Season

May 2010

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report to EPA on beach monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters.

The BEACH Act defines coastal recreation waters as the Great Lakes and coastal waters (including coastal estuaries) that states, territories, and authorized tribes officially recognize or designate for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar activities in the water.

This fact sheet summarizes beach monitoring and notification data submitted to EPA by the State of Rhode Island for the 2009 swimming season.

Figure 1. Rhode Island coastal counties.



Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2009.

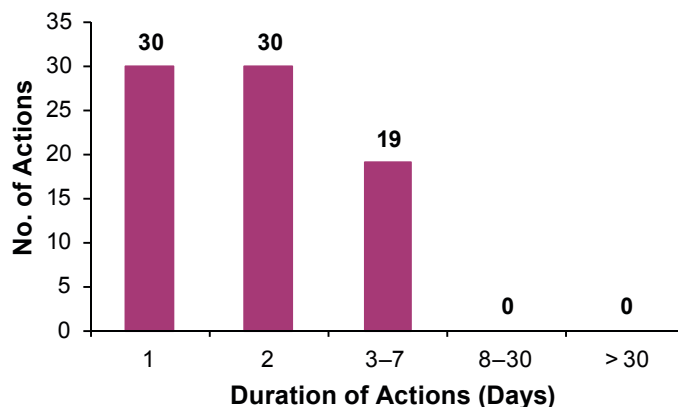
| County | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| BRISTOL | 20 | 4 | 16 |
| KENT | 16 | 4 | 12 |
| NEWPORT | 86 | 18 | 68 |
| PROVIDENCE | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| WASHINGTON | 96 | 42 | 54 |
| TOTALS | 226 | 68 | 164 |

2009 Summary Results

How many notification actions were reported and how long were they?

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Rhode Island's approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 21 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2009 swimming season. About 76 percent of Rhode Island's 79 notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Rhode Island's 2009 swimming season, actions were reported about 3 percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2009 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2009 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Rhode Island's investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2009, 91 percent of the beaches were listed as having unidentified sources of pollution.

Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

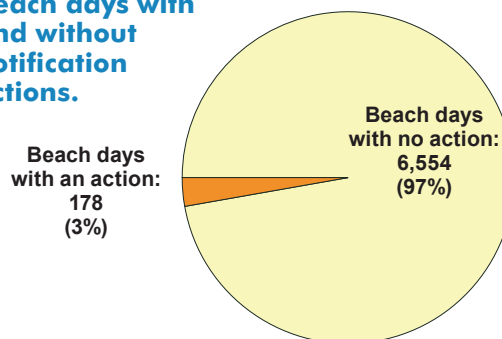


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2007-2009.

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Number of monitored beaches | 68 | 74 | 68 |
| Number of beaches affected by notification actions | 15 | 18 | 21 |
| Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions | 22% | 24% | 31% |
| Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions | 1% | 2% | 3% |

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Rhode Island:

www.ribeaches.org/index.cfm

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (74 beaches).

